

Florida Mountain Mining Sites,
Stone Cabin II
Silver City Vicinity
Owyhee County
Idaho

HAER No. ID-31-H

HAER
ID
37-SILCIV
IH-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Columbia Cascades System Support Office
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
FLORIDA MOUNTAIN MINING SITES, STONE CABIN II

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Location: Ruins of the structure are located east of the Empire State Mine on the western slope of Florida Mountain, just below the summit. Florida Mountain is located one mile southwest of Silver City, Owyhee County, Idaho.

Quad: USGS DeLamar 7.5'
UTM Coordinates: Zone 11, 520107 E, 4762668 N

Date of Construction: 1860s-1880s

Present Owner: Kinross DeLamar Mine Company

Present Use: To be demolished in 1996.

Significance: The ruins are associated with early methods of vernacular stone construction, and with early mining activity (1860s to 1880s) in southwestern Idaho. It may be associated with William Dewey and his Empire State claim on Florida Mountain.

Report Prepared by: Madeline Buckendorf, Elizabeth Jacox, Barbara Perry Bauer

Date: June, 1996

Site Layout and Description:

A small road branches off downhill from the new main road. A drift set is located 3/4 of the way down to the cabin site. The interior measurements of the drift set are 30" x 42". Its construction consists of simple post-and-beam framing at opening; the walls are lined with stone rubble. This may have only been a test adit, because the site does not look worked.

The ruined cabin consists of walls composed of uncut or rough-cut rhyolite slabs, irregularly coursed and mortared together with mud and small rock infill. The cabin is located on slight bluff. There are heavily eroded hills above and immediately below the cabin's east and above the cabin's west facades due to road work. There is a depression above the west facade--this may indicate a spring or some type of worked area. The cabin's dimensions are 16' x 22'. The walls are approximately 28 inches wide, except on the south facade where the walls are 58 inches wide.

The site was partially covered with a snow bank, so the rest of the details are hard to discern. The surrounding vegetation consists of fir trees, low brush, and scrub sage. A site revisit on 6/20/96 revealed that under the snow bank was a large, manmade hole.

Historic Context:

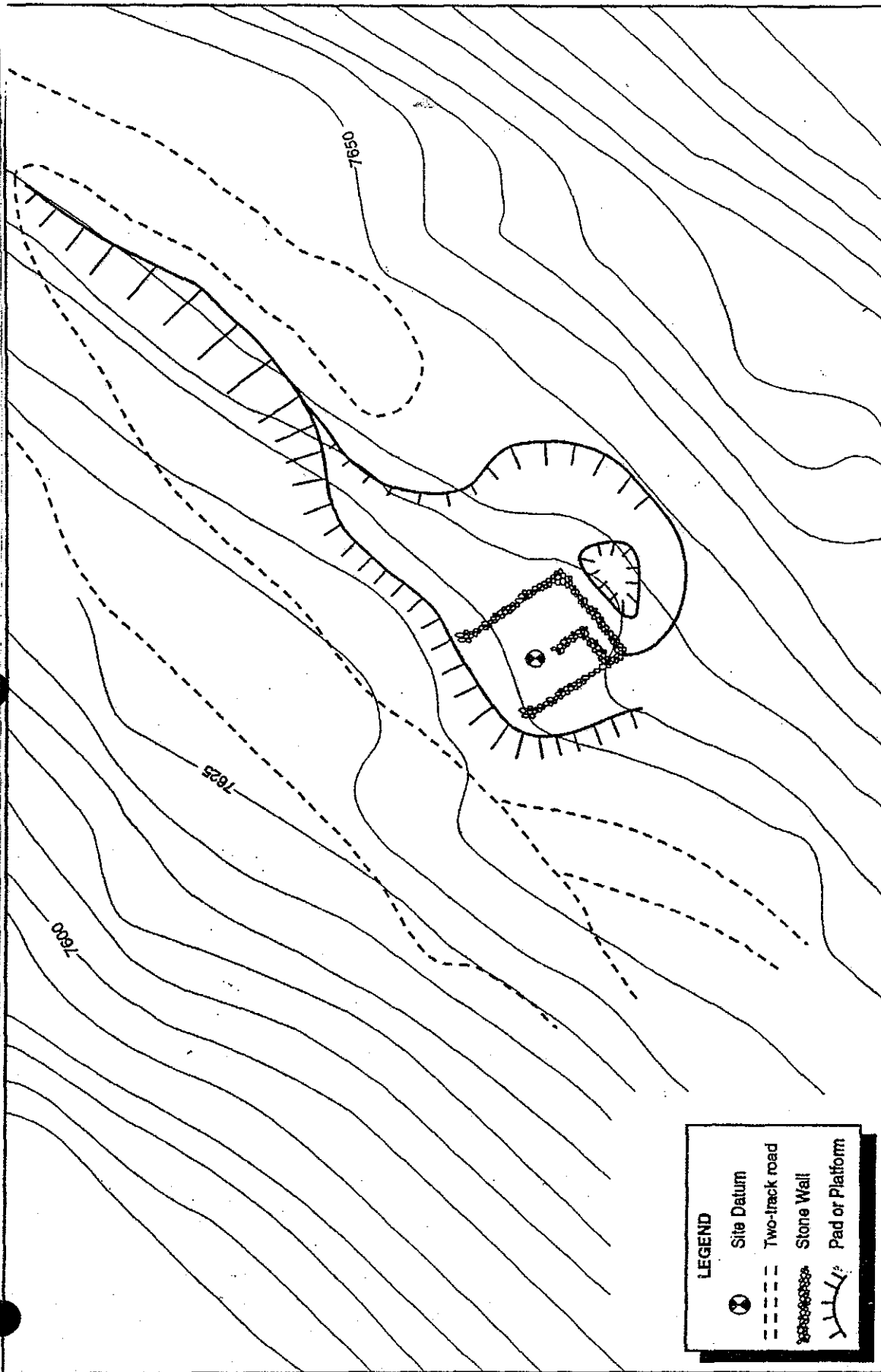
Wilma Lewis Statham, the daughter of a miner born in Silver City in 1876, indicated that Stone Cabin #2 was built by William Dewey and one of his partners, Michael Donnelly, in 1885. However, no extant Owyhee County records or newspapers mention such an event. Donnelly was an early partner of Dewey's; they both helped establish Silver City in 1865. The 1880 Idaho Avalanche mentions Dewey building a "house for the winter" near his Empire State claim, but no further information is given. Preliminary SAIC archeological results recorded in July 1995 indicated that Stone Cabin #2 may have been used for blacksmithing.¹

The cabin has a second inner wall that is only 28 inches from an exterior wall. This wall is also 28" wide.

If the site was a blacksmith shop, it may have been a simple, early shop used for the Empire State mine before electricity came to Florida Mountain. The Trade Dollar Mine financed the Swan Falls Power Plant, built in 1901. Electricity changed the size and operation of mining blacksmith shops drastically, and may account for another, larger blacksmith shop located on the Empire State Mine site.

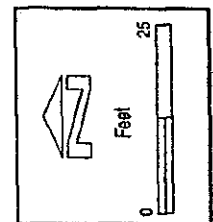
END NOTE

1. Wilma Lewis Statham to Dan Hutchinson, Bureau of Land Management, August 16, 1989; "Mining Notes," Idaho Avalanche, November 20, 1880, page 3.



LEGEND

- Site Datum
- Two-track road
- Stone Wall
- Pad or Platform



STONE CABIN II

